

**Date:** 11/24/2004

**Subject:** International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

**Type:** Executive Message

**Agency Notice Message:**

ADMINISTRATOR

USAID/General Notice  
A/AID  
11/24/2004

E X E C U T I V E   M E S S A G E

SUBJECT: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against  
Women

Five years ago, the U.N. General Assembly designated November 25th as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This year the day falls on our Thanksgiving. As we give thanks, let all of us at USAID not only commemorate the day, but renew our commitment to ending violence against the women of the world. Not only does such violence impede women's ability to live full and productive lives, but it restricts their contributions to family, society and economic development.

Violence against women is a deplorable abuse of human rights. Women are frequent targets in conflicts and war. In Darfur, women continue to suffer from an appalling number of rapes and other forms of sexual violence, branding, maiming, and displacement, the consequences of which extend beyond the short-term trauma, leading to the disintegration of families, ostracism of the victims, and ultimately mental, medical and economic consequences of untold proportions. To date, USAID has provided nearly \$113 million for medical care, shelter, food, and other relief commodities to Darfur, including funding for Physicians for Human Rights to specifically address sexual violence.

I am proud that USAID is a global leader in promoting human rights and specifically women's rights. USAID's support for democracy, a strengthened civil society, and legal reform, as well as programs in girls' education, maternal and child health, and economic growth, contributes to helping improve women's status, enhancing their opportunities, and increasing their decision-making capabilities, all of which can decrease violence against women.

As we pause to reflect on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, let us strengthen our resolve to put an end to these abuses wherever they exist.

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